220

EDUCATION AND EMPIRE OF WOMAN.

LECTURE

BY

REV. E. H. SUPPLEE, A.M.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017 with funding from
This project is made possible by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services as administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education through the Office of Commonwealth Libraries

https://archive.org/details/womanhereducatio00supp

WOMAN:

HER

EDUCATION AND EMPIRE.

LECTURE

BY

REV. E. H. SUPPLEE, A.M.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

PHILADELPHIA:
McCALLA & STAVELY, PRINTERS, 237-9 DOCK STREET.

The following is the third of a series of "Parlor Literary Lectures," given before the Author's patrons and pupils, on Friday evenings, during the past winter. It was not prepared for publication; but in compliance with the frequent and urgent requests of many parents who heard the course, it is committed to the press, as another small contribution to the great question of Woman's culture and mission. The circumstances of its delivery will sufficiently account for the familiar mode of treatment and somewhat rhetorical style.

WOMAN:

HER EDUCATION AND EMPIRE.

What can be said to-night upon this theme which has called forth the research and exhausted the thoughts of so many distinguished minds? Its novelty is well-nigh lost by its frequent discussion; views striking or original could scarcely be expected even from those who would raise the banner of clique or party, which, Heaven forbid that I should do. So that I can only plead an earnest conviction of the importance of the subject and its high claims to repeated consideration as an apology for another lecture upon the principles of female education and some objects upon which they may be legitimately applied. And further, allow me here to say, once for all, that a *few* of the suggestions in my own paper this evening, I have already presented, in a more familiar way, to *some* of my hearers, but could not omit their reproduction now without failing to examine the subject in many of its most important relations.

Woman! how many beautiful and endearing things have been whispered into her ear. How many sentiments of worthy adulation, have been amassed upon her character and mission, in pulpit, press, and magazine. Now she is a star guiding the mariner on the

sea of life; a goddess crowned with the laurels of truth and goodness, pointing to a higher and happier home. Now a rainbow in the clouds of threatening affliction and reverses, consoling, encouraging, and cheering by her plighted aid, affection, and love; and so she is, in the right direction of mind and heart, when common sense and sound wisdom are allowed their proper claims.

Her education, too! what rare and inviting opportunities our own country especially affords for its successful prosecution. And why not? Will right instruction make her less modest, tender, graceful, beautiful or lovely? Will it not rather cultivate and cherish these womanly instincts; while it eradicates and destroys that boldness, affectation, sentimentality, mannerism, and prudery, occasionally seen in young ladies of our day? Can it be that learning and accomplishment make a young woman less able to perform the duties and responsibilities of life? Will culture contract her sphere of usefulness or action? The knowledge of life and health; of light, heat, air, make her less competent to perform the duties of home, the place of purest pleasures and sweetest joys? Do mathematics give less method in arranging household affairs; or literary attainments which elevate the mind and gladden listless hours, conduce less towards happiness and good in the family circle than ignorance does? Not so, we say; and hence nowhere on the globe are her educational rights and privileges more openly acknowledged and avowed

than in our own beloved land of the free. Here, not extorted by formal declaration or bill of rights, they are freely tendered by the very spirit of our laws and liberty. Every encouragement now is given for woman's social advancement; efforts are being made everywhere for her mental culture on a scale that aims at meeting every demand; schools on admirable plans and thorough scale, are open for the admission of girls and young ladies by states and cities full, extending their advantages through all ranks of female society. Beautiful and splendid examples of womanly excellence, are already to be found, whose cultivated genius adorns almost every department of knowledge, as their grace of manners and blamelessness of life com mand the respect of every true American.

But, you say, is there not danger of forgetting in these days of such universal light, that female education should have some special reference and adaptation to prospective duties and stations of life? It is admitted. A score of honest and intelligent, but I think mistaken lecturers, oblivious of the fact that women lose their appropriate power by arrogating a sphere not well suited to them, are declaiming loud for "Woman's Rights," of which our innocent grandames never dreamed. They would have young girls, forsooth, trained to sit in city councils, plead in courts, charge juries, preach sermons, drill armies, become senators, ministers plenipotentiary, envoys extraordinary, presidents, anything, everything, but modest, retiring, un-

obtrusive young women. Still the fair, in the main, have too much good sense, to have their faculties thus thwarted by playing such a mistaken part in life. They know that as man is unable to perform the duties peculiar to woman, so is she, those of man. In her proper sphere of action, her power is not less potent, though more silent. By accomplished cultivation and superior Christian graces, she first and forever, may foster and infuse those high principles of duty to self, neighbor, country, and God, which move the world to the highest type of civilization and Christianity. This question of the social and intellectual equality of the sexes, has given rise to much animated, not to say angry discussion. Some deny *in toto* any original difference in mental organization, such as would adapt the two sexes to different duties and positions in life, accounting for that diversity in the male and female mind which is clearly seen by every attentive observer of mental phenomena, not as the result of physical constitution, but as entirely due to the influences of education and discipline. Woman, till now they say, being held in mental subjection by her legal lord, (and this much is true,) is just beginning to prove her mental capacity. Through the long years of the world's infancy, the fact that she was possessed of a mind at all, was either entirely ignored, or if admitted, it was taken for granted to be of such a quality as would scarcely repay the labor of its cultivation. It is only recently that she has been conceded a place among the intelligent beings

of the world, and in proportion as she emerges from barbarian bondage, they continue, she begins to evince not only the same strength, but precisely the same sort of mind as the other sex. A few even insist that she can become *physically* as powerful as the reputed lords of creation, attesting their faith in the assertion by a willingness to strike hands with their compeers and declaring they would be "the better half" of any man that cared enough for them. Indeed it is rumored that certain learned ladies of unaffected modesty and strictly feminine delicacy, have actually donned the masculine attire, the hair is cut short and they dress in coat and pantaloons.

Others of an opposite opinion, depreciating the influences of education, ascribe too much to mental organization, too little to the effects of early training and culture; and while they admit the various superior excellencies of woman's nature, would make her, like Milton himself, in his splendid epic, responsible to man alone, even as a moral and immortal being. In one of those evening discourses of our first parents in Paradise, the poet gives this turn of words and sentiments to the speech of our common mother, Eve. Addressing Adam, she says:

> "My author and disposer, what thou bidst,
> Unargued, I obey; so God ordains.
> God is thy law; thou mine; to know more
> Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise."

No wonder the blind bard awoke from his life-long

dream of what he would have woman be, to find her what she is, a creature of God, and a member of the great human family; morally, at least, if not physically, placed on an entire equality with man, having a common Master in heaven.

Still a strong antecedent probability, there would seem to be, that the minds of man and woman were made, not precisely like, but for one another; that there would be some difference in their structure, as they are intended for different purposes in life. Nor does this argue inferiority in either; it is perfectly consistent with equality on all matters of moment, and only proves an adaptedness that each has for the other. In the susceptibility of the heart, in tastes pure and simple, habits neat and refined, affections chaste and elevated, the palm must be allowed with no hesitation to woman; so, too, in the possession of that moral and religious nature—that character which constitutes the source of true power, and contributes to real greatness—without which judgment is cold, and knowledge itself is only for evil. Man is strong, firm, courageous, bold, gross; woman, tender, delicate, patient, lovely, gay. "The one seems formed to defend, deliberate, foresee, contrive and advise; the other, to confide, imagine, apprehend, comply and execute." In their mutual subordination and adaptation to each other, their moral union is perfect. I do not deny that girls may have the same reach of capacity, or equal genius, if you please, with boys; for experience has proved that they

often show *greater* aptitude for the reception of instruction, and more susceptibility for intellectual effort than the latter. All I assert here is, that there are some certainly defined characteristics in the intelligences of both, which is exactly suited to the demands and tastes of actual life.

And when we leave the discussion of this puzzling problem, another question, the result in part of the confusion of ideas and indistinctness of perception upon the former, immediately presents itself, respecting the extent and character of woman's education—that is, how far it should be carried out, and what special branches she should pursue. Now if it is granted that mind, wherever found, is capable of enlightenment and discipline, and if the faculties of the female mind possess capabilities which it would be tyranny to repress, then the first query may be answered in the language of interrogation again. When shall the scholar say, "It is enough; my education's finished?" When shall she rest content in the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge and truth already made? These should only inspire those desires and activities which nothing but future progress can satisfy; nothing but impossibilities subdue. See what a world of books, on all subjects, is open everywhere before the willing student: the sun and moon, the stars and planets, oceans, hills, and dales; running brooks and rivers; trees and flowers; the human spirit and the providences and perfections of God. What shall be the limit of intellectual

progress, when Nature herself, in the eternal cycles of her change, is the teacher, and the glory of God is the object of all knowledge?

Aristippus, a philosopher of Cyrene and disciple of Socrates, on being asked, "What boys ought to learn?" replied, "What they will have occasion to *use* when they become men." Let us take this pertinent answer of the famous old Greek, and apply it to the education of girls, as settling the second query, and be governed here, some at least, by a reference to the real wants of practical and social life in after years.

Here I turn aside a moment to say that no education should have exclusive reference to the period of youth. The imagination should not receive a disproportionate culture; but the fancy should be toned down by a well-trained, strengthened and expanded intellect. For the life of youth is too often but a fairy dream, or an idle revery. Invested with all the beauty of poetic charms; endowed with imaginings that glow with ideals of faith, hope, and love; it sees far off in the distant future, some fair, enchanted isle, rich and beautiful; where sweet zephyrs ever blow, and murmuring fountains flow; where flowers exhale their heavy perfume on the balmy air, and birds in rich plumage warble songs. There all seems bordered by an eternal spring; there everything is splendid and noble as could be desired for the residence of a goddess herself. The dreamer dances on from scene to scene, full of anticipated pleasures and delights. Now in some sylvan

retreat, concealed from common gaze, following the crystal brook in its playful wanderings through moss and rock; now sporting in the dales and flowery meadows, shaded from the rays of the noonday sun, and cooled by delightful waterfalls.

Happy are the days of youth! All these have they seen in their future life; and more than these, or pen can write, or tongue can tell. Thrice happy days! Nor would I break the spell, if life were *all* but such a dream, or such a revery. But sometimes, too, in after life, cliffs and hills may rise that seem to lose themselves in the very sky; they must be climbed; the road may be rough, it must be endured with patience; sometimes the pebbled brook, clear and smooth, may madly dash against the rocks; the joyous step and rosy smile of youth begin to falter and to fade from age, or care or disappointments. Then chills and blights may come; for the heart of woman, especially, though made for transport, was made for suffering as well. The fancied stormless summer may quickly glide away, the flowers begin to fade, the birds may seek another clime, and the soft sigh of the western wind change to the bleak whistlings on a frozen night through the jagged and bare branches of a forest oak. Surely, if these things, as well as the more active responsibilities and engagements, are to be met with on this journey of life, it behooves us to have our youth well provided with the proper preparatives for the conflict, that they may peacefully and hopefully continue

their journey, till declining years invite to the repose of a happy age, or resignedly leave this earthly scene for the glories of another and better world.

What is needed then in furnishing young women with these preparatives, is, first of all, an abiding trust in God, combined with a correct and liberal view of the noble and appropriate sphere of woman; an accurate knowledge of the capacity of her mind, and the complete and harmonious development of those capacities by appropriate studies in youth. By harmonious development, I mean the right education of the social, religious, imaginative, and intellectual parts of her nature in due proportion.

In the discussion of this part of the subject, before I come to speak of the great and glorious empire of woman, though the temptation is great to dwell at tedious length, I shall try to avoid descending to particulars too minute for the time it will be well to occupy for this purpose.

The great object of early education so far as it relates especially to the intellectual faculties, is to evolve, cultivate, and strengthen the powers of thought; and to give them a truthful balance and direction. We are not to rest with accomplishing young ladies in sundry extras, however refining to the taste, but to teach them to think and to reason at every step of their progress and in every branch of their education. For this purpose, that nothing is better than Mathematics, Philosophy, the Physical Sciences, and the study of language is

tested by long experience. But a few there are, who seem to think it is *unwomanly* to pursue any studies beyond the region of taste and sentiment, even if the object be to lead forth, develope and discipline the mind. Listen to a distinguished clergyman on this important matter. Directing the studies of a young lady, he says: "Philosophy, Metaphysics, or Mathematics are not *your* province. Machiavel, Euclid, Malebranche, Locke or Virgil would lie with a very ill grace in your closets. They would render you *unwomanly* indeed. They would damp that vivacity and destroy that disengaged ease and softness, which are the very *essence* of graces. The *elegant* studies are more immediately *your* department. They do not require so much time, abstraction, or comprehensiveness of mind; they bring no wrinkles, and they will give a polish to your manners, and such a liberal expansion to your understanding, as every rational creature should endeavor to attain. Whilst *men*, with solid judgment and superior *vigor*, are to combine ideas, to discriminate and examine a subject to the bottom, *you* are to give it all its *brilliancy* and all its charms. *They* provide the furniture; *you* dispose it with propriety; *they* build the house; *you* are to fancy and ornament the ceiling." What shall we say, at this time, of such restrictions as these, for one a little lower than the angels? By withholding such studies as Philosophy, Astronomy, Chemistry, Botany, Physiology, Mathematics, Mental and Moral Science, and Language from

a lady's library we alike dishonor the sex, as well as the most efficient means of producing that fullness and symmetry of mental character, so much needed in meeting the duties, responsibilities, and trials of maturer age. History, Poetry, Rhetoric, Criticisms, Music, Drawing, and Painting are branches within the circle of taste she may pursue of course. But nothing tends more to quicken the apprehension and gratify, while it arouses the attention of the young than the Physical Sciences; and nothing is better adapted as a disciplinary process for the mind, than the study of Mathematics and Language. To language especially, much attention should be given, because of the great *practical* importance of the knowledge it imparts, as well as the training it affords. While its study as a universal element tends to refine, exalt, liberalize, and expand the mind, it is in the highest degree useful in almost every department of life; but *particularly* so to woman, who is known and influential mainly from her ability to converse and write, and who presiding as she does at home, is the first teacher, by example, of its grammar and construction.

It is true, indeed, we could eat and drink and mingle with the dust without any conception of universal grammar; but who would restrict the term *practical* within such limits. No. We instinctively feel that whatever enlarges the boundaries of mental vision, while it adorns the mind, is desirable, ennobling, and useful.

Next, how shall language be acquired; for *diction-*

aries do not always give exact meanings of words, and they often give one word in explanation for another. We look for sulphur and find brimstone; look for brimstone and find sulphur; and so we are as wise as before we looked at all. Words are important only as they are the embodiment and vehicle of thought; they are the *antitypes* of ideas; and so the committing of a large assemblage of them, disconnected from their etymology, is almost as useless as it is laborious, and the only wonder is, that the toilsome and disagreeable practice has not long since been exploded.

Our language is almost entirely derivative; about one-third of its words are of Latin origin, which by a little alteration have become anglicized; and hence, however well such words may be known by memory, their full force and import can never be felt, without a knowledge of the primitives or roots from which they have grown. As to the propriety of young ladies studying the Latin, there is now but little diversity of opinion. It greatly facilitates the acquisition of the French as well as our own tongue. An accurate knowledge of the English can be more easily and much sooner attained by a thorough etymological knowledge of the language from which it is derived than in any other way.

The Latin language has so thoroughly penetrated our own, contributing to its vocabulary in various ways, that it is difficult to obtain a clear and comprehensive understanding of the latter without it. Not only are philoso-

phy, science, art, history, and general literature, filled with words of Latin origin, but even the dialect of active business and social life is replete with terms whose full force can only be obtained by studying them first in the original. And then the fact that many of these words have come to us through the French, receiving the impress of that language before entering ours, is a reason, too, why the French should also occupy a prominent place in all higher education. Besides, the French is now the social language of Europe, and its acquisition becomes a necessity to all who would visit foreign lands. Moreover, our own literature is so filled with French words and phrases which can only be understood by those who are familiar with the language. In a word, much of the elegance and precision, much of the polish and power of our own language can never be fully appreciated or known, by one who is ignorant of the French or its great ancestor, the Latin.

This patient study of words in their native language will also greatly enrich and enlarge a lady's vocabulary. In translations the best and most expressive words should always be employed, and this will tend to store the memory with such a variety of them as to enable the student to use those only of the greatest beauty and power.

Still so diverse are the characters, capabilities, tastes, and allotted term of pupilage of students, that occasionally it may be expedient to consider the study of any foreign or dead language an optional one, to be

pursued or not, as may seem wisest to parents and teachers from the condition, circumstances, and character of the pupil. Let it be known, however, that every lady making pretensions to a liberal education, should at least give a careful and analytic study to the language in which she is to express her own thoughts; she should be made acquainted with the precise meaning of words, considered as *primitives* and *derivatives*, the various ways in which they are applied; also the effect which certain syllables added or prefixed to primitives uniformly have upon their signification. The different modes of application of which words are susceptible, together with those delicate distinctions in sound, sense, and construction upon which accuracy and elegance in composition and conversation mainly depend. As a useful exercise to this end, she should carefully examine the beauties of the most eminent authors in poetry and prose till the force and meaning of words as well as the power and beauty of our language are fully felt and understood.

But to accomplish this may not be mere child's play. Like everything else that is valuable in life, it must be the result of pains-taking, toil, and care. It will require the same self-denying application and inconvenience, known to our ancestors. The false and pernicious sentiment that girls can be *manufactured* into scholars by some modern innovation in the school-machinery with little or no effort on their part, or simply by listening to the rattle of the "good old-fash-

ioned" machinery, about their ears for a few months, and being subjected to a few revolutions of its wheels, is the source of a world of trouble to teachers and no less disappointment to parents and guardians. Torricelli, with his mercury and glass tube, never dreamed of a vacuum so complete as that which must exist in the minds of young ladies whose education has been so exquisitely finished under this impression. Girls to be educated, forsooth, by listening to the buzz of a few ologies and ographies, for a short time, reading in the meantime a few yellow-cover sentimentalities, then coming forth full-armed like so many young Minervas from the head of old father Jupiter, well qualified for their respective stations in life. Truly if Ptolemy had lived among those entertaining such notions, he might have found some royal road to learning less laborious and requiring less attention than the common one.

Great importance, too, should be assigned to the study of the Physical Sciences; particularly in this age, when their triumphs are so splendid and an ignorance of them so lamentable. While they are exciting and beautiful to an intelligent mind, they are, at the same time very proper auxiliaries for cultivating the reason and judgment. Light ever speeds with angel wings through elastic ether that fills all space, and its laws cannot be too well known, nor its operations too clearly classified. Electricity darts zig-zag and forked through the gloom of a summer sky and its striking phenomena should be the subject of experiments and

study of all. The spangled orbs of heaven harp along the viewless boundaries of eternal space—the stars still sing together as they did when the sons of God shouted of old for joy. The laws of Kepler stand more than pyramid monuments of their persevering authors, while the intricate demonstrations of Newton may always enlarge and ennoble the mind. Oh! what a field for study is in the creation book of God! In every blossom that blows, in every plant that grows. Birds in high plumage warbling songs, and fishes with their fins, sporting in the deep. Fossils and foliage, rocks and rivers, mountains and valleys, atmosphere and oceans are full—all full of the highest interest and usefulness to a comtemplative mind!

Faithful instruction should also be imparted in physiology and the laws of health. Young ladies should be made acquainted with the physical agents which perpetually surround them; light, heat, air, food; how they are liable to perversion through ignorance, producing sickness, suffering, disease, and death; or capable through knowledge of promoting health, beauty, strength, and enjoyment; for with the blessings of the latter, this world may be a very bright and beautiful world, or it may become through ignorance, simply a scene of sorrow. If we would do something to avert the blight that shows so largely upon female woe, evidenced in the pale faces and drooping forms of the lovely of our city to-day, that is spreading premature decay among us, making the life of woman too often but one long

agony of pain, giving feeble mothers to feebler children, till more than half the green mounds of our cemeteries mark the dead of infancy and youth, we must, I repeat it, place a higher estimate upon the daily necessities of water, fresh air, proper clothing, regularity in eating, sleeping, amusement, and employment. If life and health are the first of all earthly blessings then to preserve them surely becomes the first of all duties.

But possibly, the loss of a healthy condition of the body, without which there is seldom or never a healthy condition of mind, is not always the result of ignorance in Hygiene, even where knowledge might preserve both life and health. Occasionally young girls may *willfully* determine, in spite of knowledge, to make themselves more feeble and fragile that they may become, as they think, more womanly and fascinating; for I find in a popular Rhetoric of the day, and probably such would-be beauties have found it too, this theory and sentiment advanced upon the principle of beauty. "As vastness and strength," the author says, "are elements of the sublime, so smallness and delicacy belong to the beautiful. The former qualities excite our astonishment and admiration; the latter our sympathy and love. Whatever we are fond of, is associated in our minds with the idea of smallness. Hence the diminutives used in every language to express affection and tenderness. So, an air of robustness and strength, however conducive to the sublime is imcompatible

with the beautiful. To the latter, an appearance of delicacy is essential, which may be carried even to the borders of *fragility*. And to these qualities, too, much of woman's beauty is attributable." So from this, one might imagine, though it is barely possible, that there may be in the world, a few charming, dear young dunces who, with a view of making themselves more Rhetorically beautiful, go on eating all sorts of food at all sorts of hours, sleeping in ill-ventilated apartments, and wearing thin-soled slippers, gossamer stockings, and low mull dresses at winter evening parties, as if disease and death were synonyms of beauty. Let such remember that there are richer and rarer qualities of human beauty, than mere smallness or delicacy of proportion, size, or shape, arising from the expression of the moral and intellectual virtues on the human countenance. Yes! there are higher and nobler ingredients of female beauty than mere feebleness or fragility witnessed in the blush of conscious innocence and the dignity of a cultivated mind. What is smallness or even uniformity of features to the rosy hue of health and the life of intelligence sparkling in the eye and playing on the countenance of educated young women? Such then as wish to become truly beautiful, let them continue to improve their understanding, cultivate health, good-nature, modesty, and cheerfulness, repressing evil or trifling thoughts, as the best and surest means of securing the highest order of personal beauty as well as the proper ornaments of character.

Moreover, among the Physical Sciences, Botany is admirably suited to the female mind. Girls naturally love flowers; and well they may; for they are the emblems of innocence and joy. And if they love to plant them, to pluck them, to smell them, to admire them, to arrange and to wear them, then surely they ought to understand something *about* them. Nor should they rest satisfied to *read* of them; as well attempt to learn the piano from theories of instruction, or even from a teacher without ever touching a key. No! they should see them where they grow, at their homes; in the valleys, on the hills, in the hedges and the ditches, on the margin of the rivers, in the woods, and in the meadows. And *there* should they analyze them, and learn their names, while they experience that pleasant excitement which a summer search after them never fails to afford. Thus will a new source of enjoyment open to their view, giving pure and healthy thoughts with sound bodies, and offering inducements to recreation, never before conceived of by those who have never tried the experiment. Nor is the study a very difficult one, when pursued with due attention. There is no necessity of the repulsive appearance of the hard words proving an *invincible* obstacle, even to those unacquainted with the learned languages, if the subject be properly presented.

Botany is at once both pleasing and useful. All its incidents and allurements are promotive of health and pure intellectual pleasure. It excites curiosity and

leads to its gratification, calling out and directing the powers of observation, while it contributes important knowledge and leads the thoughts "through nature up to nature's God:" "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." It teaches, too, the noble lesson of useful industry to listless youth; for every flower, every forest tree is designed to work in some Heaven-appointed sphere. All the vast variety and infinite number of plants in the great laboratory of nature, are intended to change the very elements themselves, air, earth, water, and even light and heat into organic matter, causing them to reappear in other forms of life and beauty; preparing food and fuel, clothing and medicine for man and animal from every passing breeze, and every falling rain-drop. The atmosphere we breathe would poison should they fail in their appointed duties. How manifold, how wonderful is the work of plants! The whole universe is full of the echoes of their toil!

Next I would enumerate Domestic Economy, as in the highest degree important to a young lady's complete education. "To know how to sew and knit and mend and cook and superintend a household," a lady herself has said, "is beyond all price to a woman. Nor is there any necessity that the gaining of such information should interfere with intellectual acquirements or elegant accomplishments. Whatever con-

duces to the health, happiness, and good of the family circle, is worthy of our highest care." Women of the highest ranks among the Greeks and Romans, worked at every kind of occupation necessary for the support of a family.

The spindle and the distaff are especially mentioned of the daughters of Isreal with great commendation. Can female education be complete without a practical knowledge of the household arts? Certainly not. She who is to manage the affairs of home, should she not have an insight into them? On the "Shocking Ignorance" which existed upon this subject twenty years ago, I clip the following article from Punch, as then published; "Some time ago," he says, "he had occasion to horrify his readers by publishing the report of his select committee on education, which revealed the amount of ignorance of domestic matters prevailing among young men generally. His commissioners then sent him their *second* report, which relates to the knowledge of business and the affairs of life possessed by young ladies. Here it is: 'Miss Mary Ann Watkins examined.—Is the daughter of a private gentleman. Has several brothers and sisters. Is engaged to be married to a young surgeon, as soon as he can get into practice. Has an idea that she ought to know something of housekeeping; supposes it comes naturally. Can sing and play, draw and embroider. Cannot say that she ever darned a stocking. The price of Windsor soap is from one shilling to one and three

pence the packet; cannot tell what yellow comes to, never got any. Knows how to furnish a house, would go to the upholsterer's and buy furniture. Cannot say how much she would expect to give for an arm-chair, or for a work hand stand, or a set of tea things; should ask mamma, if necessary; never thought of doing so before. Papa paid for the dress she has on; forgets what he gave for it.'

"'Miss Harriet Sommers.—Papa is a Clergyman. Is unable to say whether he is a *pluralist* or not. He is a curate and has but *one* curacy. Expects to be married, of course. Would not refuse a young man with three hundred a year. Has no property of her own. Has some skill in needle-work: lately worked an afghan in red, blue, and yellow worsted. Can make several *washes* for the complexion. Cannot tell *how* she would set about making an apple-dumpling. Loaves should remain in the oven till they are done; the time they would take depends upon circumstances. If she were married, would expect her husband to be *ill* some time: supposing him to be ordered calves' foot jelly, should send for it at the pastry cook's. It never *occurred* to her that she might make it herself. If she tried, should buy some calves' feet; what next she should do, cannot say. Has received a fashionable education; knows French and Italian. Likes *dancing* better than anything else.'

"'Miss Jane Briggs.—Is the daughter of a respectable tradesman, a grocer and tea dealer. Looks forward

to a union with somebody in her own station in life. Was for five years at a boarding school in Clapham. Really cannot say what a ledger is; it may be the same as a day-book. Has an album. Has painted flowers in her album. Knows what a receipt book is; it tells you how to dress things. Should suppose that a receipt in full was a receipt that told you all particulars. Never heard of a balance sheet; it may be a calico sheet for all she knows. Cannot say whether Papa buys or sells at prime cost. Has eaten fowl occasionally. Never dressed one. Does not know how to make stuffing for a duck or a goose.'

"'Miss Elizabeth Atkins.—Resides at Hamstead with her parents. Papa is a solicitor; has an office at Gray's Inn. Will have a little money of her own, shortly, when she comes of age. Is not aware whether she is a minor or not. The property was left by her Aunt. Cannot say whether she is a legatee or testatrix. Her property is *real* property. Is sure of that. It is in the funds. Should say that it was not personal property, as it was not anything about her person. Knows what consols are; has read about them in history; they were ancient Romans. Mamma keeps house. When she marries, expects to do the same. Is unable to say what the family milk score is a week. Starch is used to stiffen collars; has no notion what it is a pound, or what it is made of, or whether it is used with hot water or cold. Drugget is *cheaper* than Turkey carpet; but how much, cannot say. Her time is

principally occupied in fancy work, reading novels, and playing quadrilles and waltzes on the piano.'

"Out of sixty other young ladies examined, only three knew what a sausage was composed of, and four how to make onion sauce. They mostly could tell what the last song was; but none of them knew the current price of beef. Every soul of them meant to marry as soon as possible.

"What is to become of their husbands? Each, of course, answers 'What!' No doubt that the many favors and flattering attentions bestowed upon such young ladies of our own age, on account of their beauty, gayety, rank, wealth, dress, or polite accomplishments, will turn into neglect and disgust, unless they be accompanied by some more solid worth."

So too, a pure and unsullied literature may have an immense influence for good on the character of mind and heart. Unfortunately the world is just now full of the *worst*, as well as the *best* sort of literature, and the youth of our time seem to be left to *chance* as to what they shall read, instead of being properly directed. How fatal, alas, is the poison of a corrupt literature. It produces a state of mind utterly at variance with a healthy play of reason and is opposed to social and domestic happiness. First it bewilders and intoxicates, then spring up the golden mountains and castles in the air. As the votary quaffs the gilded cup, the dreams of some palatial home of an ideal future, where dripping fountains ever flow through spicy groves, and fragrant

bowers are musical with birds; where life is one eternal joy, without a single summer storm. And still the silly girl swallows the pernicious draught, late and early, mid-day and midnight, and none so happy as she; and still the enchanting scene moves on. She laughs, and sighs, and sings, and blushes, and trembles while she carves the coffin to enclose her dying peace and virtue. Soon infection breathes its deadly blight throughout her heart, tainting, blasting, and destroying all that is fair and pure, and lovely, and beautiful, and good, till dead innocence is borne to an early grave.

But alas! no closing tomb can cover the memory of such a death, no ephemeral rose planted there can make it beautiful. Its ghosts, a chaos of calamities; "murmurings, discontents, corroding griefs, distracted thoughts," even madness itself and sometimes a suicidal death, like Banquo's, rise, though unperceived by friends, and "shake their gory locks," crying there's peace no more; the delicate and fair have killed their peace; it is buried with their innocence and virtue. There is a species of sorrow, sometimes in the memory of a departed friend that is near akin to sweetest joy; where the recollection of an innocent heart, now cold and still, is a comfort preferable far to forgetfulness. But there is no sweetness in remorse. The very heavens seems to shine in vain; the twittering birds of spring do not charm; and the change of seasons brings no joy.

I know it is not enough to tell a child, that there are

rocks and shoals on the ocean of literature. What a navigator wants on such a sea, is a chart to tell him where the danger lies and how to avoid it. To specify at this time, however, what particular works should be read or studied, and what discarded would make a list much too long and dry for this occasion. Besides, "of making books," the preacher says, "there is no end;" and so it seems important to lay down some principle by which they may be selected at all times and under all circumstances; to state a sort of formula, that will test the poison wherever and whenever it may be present. The fatal hemlock, administered by the Athenians, to their Phocion and Socrates, belongs to the same botanical family as plants which are proper for food and good for odor. But Hemlock is nauseous to the smell and spotted in appearance; and so any literature, whether of History, Biography, Poetry, Criticism, or Novel, which has the nausea of sickly sentiment, misanthropy, and moral depravity; or the spots of unbelief in true religion, love, constancy, and duty, contains the deadly damps of the soil where hemlock grows, and will make a sure prey of all who expose themselves to its pestilential mists and exhalations. These suggestions may be a guide, however far or in whatever direction a young lady may push her future course of reading.

The chief ornamental branches which a lady may pursue are music, drawing, and painting. I would not advocate an unlimited attention to the piano, unless

there is special talent for it. Where there is such talent, let it be cultivated to the highest degree of perfection. But singing under any circumstances is an almost indispensable accomplishment; and in view of its various advantages, should receive early and *continued* cultivation. While it improves the voice, it gives a charm and variety to its tones even in reading and speaking never imagined by one who has never noticed its effects. It conduces to health, and by increasing the activity of the vocal organs, tends to fortify against disease and death; it is antidote to lassitude and weariness; it is the overflow of kind and joyful feelings; it tends to improve the heart; to soften and elevate the feelings; to strengthen the attachments and endearments of domestic life; it is the talent employed by that "great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, saying salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Surely a talent so important and so sacred should never be neglected. And besides, it increases one's happiness by giving a higher appreciation of the music of nature; for the world is *full* of music, and its influence for good upon mind and heart, has from the earliest period, been held in the highest estimation. The insect brood from forest boughs to tiniest fragrant flower, buzz in ten thousand forms on the playful summer breeze. In the coolness of the shade, in the raging of the noon and the quiet of the night, is heard the

constant motion of their wings or the melody of their song. The hum of honey-bee, lulls the languor of the noon, with the viewless vibrations of its odorous wings, as ever busy, it seeks its treasure and its hive. Its mellow tones invite to duty, a fair example to listless youth, a warning of the future. The grasshopper on the glade, the cricket on the hearth, send forth their notes at noon and night-time, diverting the mind from cares intent and constant meditation. So, too, the waving woods bear on their freshening gales, the song of beast and bird rejoicing the sorrowing heart. Who is not charmed with the songs of summer birds? Heard in the midst of rural scenery, they recall the most delightful scenes of youth. On wing or tree how sportive and how gay are they. The sweet warble of their free notes wild, from early dawn to dusky eve, has been admired in every age. A heavenly choir, they raise the soul in rapture towards their Heavenly King.

Then there are drawing and painting, twin sisters of music. They are innocent and refined companions for retirement, and their practice *useful* as well as pleasing. They aid in designing and executing the thousand little articles of a lady's wardrobe, and their charming pictures of nature cheer the mind and invigorate the heart.

While they teach to discover a higher beauty in stream, foliage, and sky, they give us a richer relish of the master productions of art. When nature is covered with snow, and the wind whistles without, the

fancy scene of spring may bloom upon the heart, and grow in rich green on the canvas within. Let it be distinctly understood, however, that none of these ornamental branches are ever to be cultivated at the expense of the more valuable acquirements of Language, Literature, Mathematics, Philosophy (moral and mental), and the Physical Sciences, which have more special reference to the more important duties of life. And the whole *curriculum* must, of course, be preceded by thorough drilling in those fundamentals of Spelling, Reading, Writing, Geography, Arithmetic, and English Grammar, which, lying as they do at the basis of all sound education, prepare pupils to enter with credit and advantage to themselves upon the higher branches of learning. An entire hour might be spent in discussing the plan and importance of that portion of education which we call *primary*, but I forbear. Let it be sufficient at this time to say, that if these elementary branches of the foundation be not mastered, no smattering of a hundred sciences will be sufficient to insure stability or prevent breaks in the ill-built walls, however decorated, adorned, or finished-off may be the edifice. But commencing right, by passing through that course of mental training which rests at the *bottom* of future acquisitions, the student, inspired with the true love of Science, Philosophy, Literature, and Art, does not stop at the first milestone on the road she has run, as if the race were ended there, but looking at the path she has pursued with pleasure, and enjoying for a season the

flowers she has gathered by the way, she continues her journey, mile by mile, through all her subsequent life. Shunning the meanderings that lead from that road, she escapes the temptations of the noisy pleasures and pursuits of the world; the tricks and blandishments of the wicked, together with the thousand unsatisfactory delights and vanities of an unsanctified society, while she secures those celestial sentiments, honest purposes, exalted emotions, and that peaceful repose inspired by pleasures which spring from innocence of heart and purity of mind. Remembering, of course, that as Religion should be a prominent element in female education, so should it be a constant companion of a woman's life; for however extensively acquainted with Philosophy, Science, and Art; however conversant with the polite arts, and the rare productions of the best authors, if the Spirit of the Saviour is wanting, she is still without the proper provision for life, death, and eternity.

Having thus traced, in a very practical way, some of the fundamental principles of female education, it remains to find a field for their proper application. Nor have we far to go; our own country affords an ample one for the exertions of educated women, without any sacrifice of their modesty or dignity, in diverting and restraining, by the charms of home, the peculiar tendency of the American mind. The tendency of this mind is too much toward outward activity, and, inflamed with a feverish anxiety for success, it needs the

repose, the quiet, and the intellectual delights of the domestic circle—something to bring it back to human affections and sympathies. Material life, lived too fast and loved too much, must be restrained by superior female cultivation. The duties of the counting-room, the field, the shop, the study, must be softened by the allurements of pleasant conversation and gentler feelings of a happy home. So, too, a portion of our Society, following a round of idle dissipation and tiresome compliments, or attending frivolous amusements, demands the aid of educated young women of amiable qualities and irreproachable conduct, whose purity and power, refined sense and elevated sentiments, may attract by the charms of the dearest spot on earth, "home, sweet home!" *This* is the orbit, in which woman's cultivated intellect is to exert its *chief* power. Here, her glorious mission is to be true, faithful, kind, and loving. Here, adorning herself with the beauty of wisdom and the dignity of grace, she may create an atmosphere as congenial to the growth of intelligence and virtue, as is the external air of spring to the violet and anemone. By the charms of her mind, her neatness, temperance, humility, meekness, and prudence, she may make her abode the very mansion of goodness and peace—a guardian by its sweet endearments and intellectual delights, against the excesses of the American mind and inordinate human passions. But how deplorable the *reverse* of all this! When woman's mansion and her own blandishments and charms, instead of being favor-

able to human happiness and virtue, instead of restraining an undue outward activity, allaying a crazy anxiety, or checking the violence of passion, become the sources of misery and crime. When even her *intellectual* endowments, not chastened and controlled by the orderings of God, ensnare herself and others into vanity and sin. Ignorance, indifference, or impiety at home, cast their baleful shadows on the future, and their darkness will there remain, till the sunbeams of intellectual light and gospel truth play round the hearth, and sparkle in the plans of her whose glorious privilege it is, by her loveliness and influence, to ennoble and refine, alleviate the pressure of misfortune, and sow the seeds of knowledge, piety, and goodness at home. Look at the picture which has been drawn of the fashionable wife, who having lost the affection of her husband, and with it her influence over him, has thus made shipwreck of home. "See that fine mansion where she dwells; thousands have been lavished on those imposing walls, long colonnades, and high, arched windows; now and then you obtain a glimpse of costly hangings, rich carpets, and tall mirrors which dazzle with their magnificence. Often you pause a moment, looking wistfully in through the half-closed blinds, and murmur to yourself as you pass on, 'Well, I should think the possessor of all this might enjoy life.' But you are sadly mistaken. The Angel of Peace never folds her white wings by that fireside; the gentle spirit of content never sheds her holy influence there. The master of

the mansion, though yet in his prime, seems prematurely old; there is an expression of habitual suffering around his firmly-compressed lips, and his broad brow bears many a trace of care. Ah, there is a *vulture* at his heart, which, like the hero of the olden story, he would fain conceal. Years ago, he married a beautiful girl, with a thousand pleasant visions of domestic quietude and bliss. But his dreams have faded; the rosy hue of romance is lost in the cold-gray dawn of bitter reality. His wife presides over his household with surpassing gracefulness; she is the idol of society, and a leader of fashion. She goes and comes through those spacious halls, dressed in garments that might befit a queen; she gives brilliant dinners, where she shines the brightest star, and parties which everybody pronounce charming. But she is never the kind, devoted companion, the loving, trusting helpmate, sharing every joy and sorrow, cheering when he desponds, and counseling in trials and perplexities with winning grace and tenderness. In short, she never makes home happy."

Yet history of Ancient and Modern times is full of sublime and illustrious examples of female fidelity and fortitude in the performance of those domestic virtues and obligations imposed upon the mistress and mother of a family, which though they pertain to the retirement of life, have excited the admiration of the world. Turn for a moment to Roman story; let your eye there light upon Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi. Who does

not love to contemplate the purity and loveliness of her character? Refusing the hand of Ptolemy himself, she devotes her whole time to the charge and education of her fatherless children. What an example of goodness, of private worth is here presented! In rebuking the Campagnan lady, who seems to have valued herself more for riches and jewels than personal merits. Well might she in conscious pride, pointing to her Roman boys, exclaim, "*Hæc ornamenta mea sunt*," these are my jewels. Or to another of modern date. The mother of the Poet, Gray. Notwithstanding the improvidence and brutality of her husband, she toils on night and day to give her son that intellectual and moral culture, the advantage of which shines forth with so much beauty in his poems, supporting in the meantime herself and a large family. James Wolf, the renowned English officer who was slain at the conquest of Quebec in 1759, our histories tell us, spoke to his men the night before his death of the Poet, Gray, (whose "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" had just been published,) and said, "I would prefer being the author of that poem to the glory of beating the French to-morrow;" then in the silence of the night on the flowing tide he repeated:

> "The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
> And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
> Await alike the inevitable hour;
> The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

Who can wonder that the author of this never men-

tioned his departed mother without a sigh? Yes, there are mothers in history and in life, who, instead of becoming slaves of fashionable society, have abstracted themselves sometimes from company that they might inculcate a love for real piety, excite a thirst for knowledge, and form habits of application and reflection at home. And in all the world where is there a lovelier, holier, sweeter scene than that of a pious and affectionate mother, devoting her time and strength to secure for her children that safest competency of all—a cultivated intellect and an affectionate heart.

But though shelter by domestic duties is a branch of woman's prerogative, it does not follow hence that there is *no* work to be done for the great cause of morals and truth by more active female influence; that she any more than sister Charity should *always* stay at home, because her first, her highest call is there; that she should never take her walks abroad. No, not so! Teaching, Philanthropy, Literature, and loyalty from a sphere, whose circumference is decked with garlands and glory for the exertions of the female intellect and heart. In week-day and Sunday school, her enlightened benevolence may find happiness in communicating a healthful influence to those within its reach; in planting there the standard of elevated thought and refinement, cultivating the conscience, giving right principles of action, and guarding against the influence of evil. Has the growing mind been roused by viewing the majesty of the spangled vault some calm, clear night?

How pleasant then to name the stars and explain the laws of planetary motion. Has it been charmed to inquiry, during some Saturday's walk from hearing the fairy music of fresh water streams, the whispering of the grass, the song birds or hum of the honey bee? How sweet the task to tell of the laws of sound, whether floating in the air from the harmony of instruments, or heard in the *unwritten* music of nature. Has the rainbow's magnificence gladdened the sight? Behold the wonders of refraction, color, vision. The lightnings play over the dark cloud in its flight? Relate the mysteries of Electricity and the sublime certainties of the Telegraph. How delightful thus to mold the mind of youthful innocence, yet untainted with the artifices and inglorious vanities of the world; to teach the soul to walk erect in the peaceful paths of virtue. To fortify it against the tricks and wiles of the wicked; to cultivate a love for art and science; for the beautiful and sublime; to banish light and low or insignificant thoughts and inspire with sentiments of loftiest range. How wide! how lasting! how sacred is the trust! There is no higher public duty than that of employing one's faculties for the benefit of mankind, and no sight more lovely than an intelligent, pious woman teaching children, forming characters for life.

Philanthropy, too, has always been, as it should always be, a distinguished trait of woman's character, and our own country unites its testimony to those already received of her charity and hospitality. Wherever war

has been wickedly forced upon a nation, the compassionate heart of woman has accomplished much toward alleviating its frightful evils. As the dreadful conflict rages, as death and disease follow in its train, as tears are dropping in secret from pitying eyes at the loss of protectors and friends, butchered and cut to pieces by this horrid demon, ten thousand Christian women, with a heroism, surpassing the age of romance, are diffusing charity, and peace, and health to the sick and bereaved and comfort to the dying. Braving pestilence and peril they save the lives of myriads by their active humanity; and soften, as far as possible, the miseries of war, by extending their benevolent sympathy to those who fall in fight. History says it was a woman who first appointed military surgeons to attend the movements of an army and be at hand on the field of battle. Actuated by the broad principles of humanity and religion, she paid these surgeons out of her own fortune, and provided tents furnished with beds and all things requisite for the sick and wounded soldiers. It was woman, in a word, that originated the soldier's hospital, it was woman that afterwards reformed its management.

Next, Literature has been mentioned as well suited to the female sex. Endowed by nature with a peculiar refinement of taste and sensibility, accompanied with high moral sentiments and susceptibilities to religion, their writings would naturally possess a never-failing aim for truth, at the same time that they exhibited a power over the feelings, and a pathos that would be-

come almost irresistible. Who can over-estimate the importance of their pictures of moral purity, of nature, of domestic affection, (constituting as they would our fire-side literature) in moulding and educating the heart of youth and in recovering the lost of maturer age from ignorance and sin? Away from the rougher scenes and struggles of outward life, their singular penetration and perception of character from external peculiarities, would enable them to give reflections upon human nature and narratives of manners that would cause us to see ourselves as others see us, and dispose us to a better course of conduct in the future. Indeed in this department, as well as in science, woman has already done no mean service, she has supplied countless homes in the old and new world with instruction and entertainment, leaving unending impressions for good upon the hearts and minds of the old and the young. Since the days of Mrs. Barbauld and Maria Edgeworth, who commenced the reform of books for children, highly cultivated ladies have been using the press everywhere and every way, as a vehicle of the influence which Providence has given them. The delicacy and pure feeling that pervade their books and contributions, have greatly aided in softening and toning down the prevailing hardihood and materialism of our generation. Their descriptions of the beauty and loveliness of purity; of temperance and abstinence, faith and devotion, justice, charity and benevolence have reclaimed full many a one whose passions had

never been regulated by virtue nor disciplined by reason. All hail the happy day! when the modest unobtrusive worth of woman sought literature as a proper application of the gifts and graces with which God has so bountifully endowed her.

There is yet another sphere for female usefulness. It is found in the moral destiny of this great Republic. Our country is certainly to exert an unexampled power on the affairs of the world. The splendid realities of independence and constitutional liberty, achieved by our ancestors, have been sealed by the deeds of no unworthy posterity. This magnificent domain, bounded only by the great oceans, lakes, and gulfs; cradled in the storm of '76, baptized by the loyal blood of '61 and '65, can it be that the glory of her hope is to be thus obscured in the youth-time of her life? No, no! her fate is not to flourish thus only for a season; but, towering aloft as a light to the world, it is hers to aid in giving civilization and religious liberty to all future ages. From the "storms and snows of the North to the soft skies and sweet flowers of the South, her banner must ever wave an emblem of the free." God's plan has ever been, in leading the world to its present progress in moral and intellectual light, to select certain nations to play prominent parts in his providence; and that this country, endowed with Grecian literature and a pure theology, is one of the modern nations called to advance the cause of Christianity and proclaim freedom to every country, all her history tends

to prove. But, in disseminating this glorious light and in securing the perpetuity of our laws and liberties, woman has an important position allotted to her. Talk of enlarging her sphere, forsooth, why *nothing* permanent can be achieved without her aid and elevation. As Rome was saved from the vengeance of the Volsci, by the patriotism of her women. So America must be preserved from a repetition of those insurrectionary movements and habits of insubordination which dissolve our society, and lead to anarchy and confusion. To such women as the mothers of Washington and La Fayette do we indirectly owe the liberties we now enjoy, with such does their perpetuity depend. For a hundred years the tocsin of warning has sounded high and loud here, that the preservation of our political institutions can only be secured by the virtue and intelligence of the people; intelligence to perceive, virtue to *discharge* the great and important duties of freemen; that they must go hand in hand, and be exercised with untiring vigilance. When will we *heed* the warning; when will we look at the origin of things and be convinced that education to be a *national* blessing, must be accompanied by moral culture, that godliness, disinterestedness, and patriotism must be inculcated on the youth of our land; that woman must transmit the inextinguishable fire of these virtues to the young till they bless and purify our land?

Why even the Spartan law-giver, though trampling on every amiable and modest feeling of his country-

women, saw that the very existence of the State depended on the character and teachings of the Spartan mother. His object, it is true, was not to make the people happy in the enjoyment of peaceful pursuits; happy in being virtuous; happy in their homes, their families, their religion, which *should* be the object and aim of all governments, but to make a nation of brave warriors, bold in spirit, prompt and decisive in action; and well was his system adapted to that for which it was intended. May we not learn something from it so far as it relates to the use of appropriate means for securing a desired end? And as Spartan dames were taught to consider a suit of armor the choicest gift they could bestow upon their sons, so let the armor and amulet of an honorable and virtuous life, not simply as the subject of an intellectual apprehension, but as a living truth, be the American mother's highest pride; let her lead her boys to honor and virtue by inspiring in them an admiration of all that is good, beautiful, and true, as exhibited in herself. Oh! that the women of to-day may prove blessings to our country's future; that by their wisdom, simplicity, sincerity, holiness, love of liberty, obedience to rightful authority, *they* may become the cement of American society. Thrice happy lot! Sacred as the sphere of angels; to give character to a nation by the tone and elevation of her own, to give to a living soul the impress of her taste and aspirations, to give mind its motives to duty, and stamp on the susceptible heart the image

of its God; such is the great and glorious empire of woman to-day, and well may she exult in it. May it become a triumphant and universal one; bringing peace and joy, intelligence and love, righteousness and law to our border, yea to the whole earth!